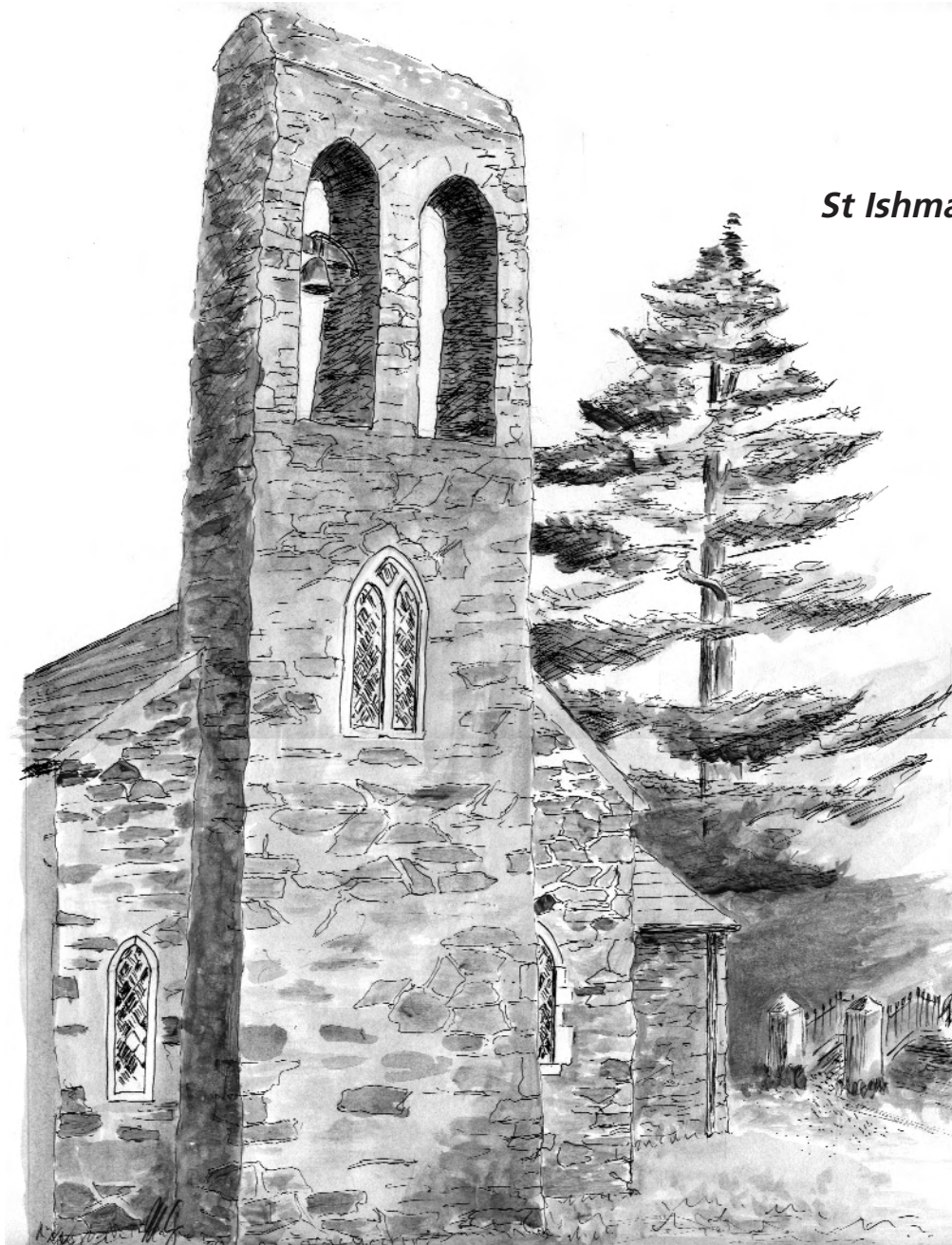


ST ISHMAELS



St Ishmaels Church

*Naws am Le
Sense of Place*

Wildlife around St Ishmaels

The tidal pools and salt marshes of The Gann Estuary are small in area but very diverse. They are important for wading birds, 400-500 over-winter in most years. Little stint, curlew, sandpiper and red and greenshank may be found. The nationally scarce lax flowered sea lavender grows extensively on the marsh as does the rare grass *Parapholis strigosa*. Otters breed in the reed-beds and badgers in the conifer plantation above the estuary. Kingfishers can be seen on the upper reaches of The Gann. In the shallow waters of the estuary lives the very rare gilthead bream. The seashore off Musselwick provides a habitat for the introduced Japanese seaweed *Sargassum muticum* and at Monkhaven the tentacles of snakelocks anemones are bright green because they house an algal symbiont. Nationally scarce red-billed choughs are often seen around the cliff-tops, flying acrobatically and feeding on the insects of the maritime heath.

Geology

The red soils of the area are derived from old red sandstones seen at Linsway Bay and Sandy Haven (395 million years old). There are occasional exposures of older rocks (420 million years). Some of these near Slate Mill Bridge are sedimentary and contain fossils. The cliff tops are covered with glacial till made of unconsolidated material dumped by melting ice around 20,000 years ago.

Ancient History

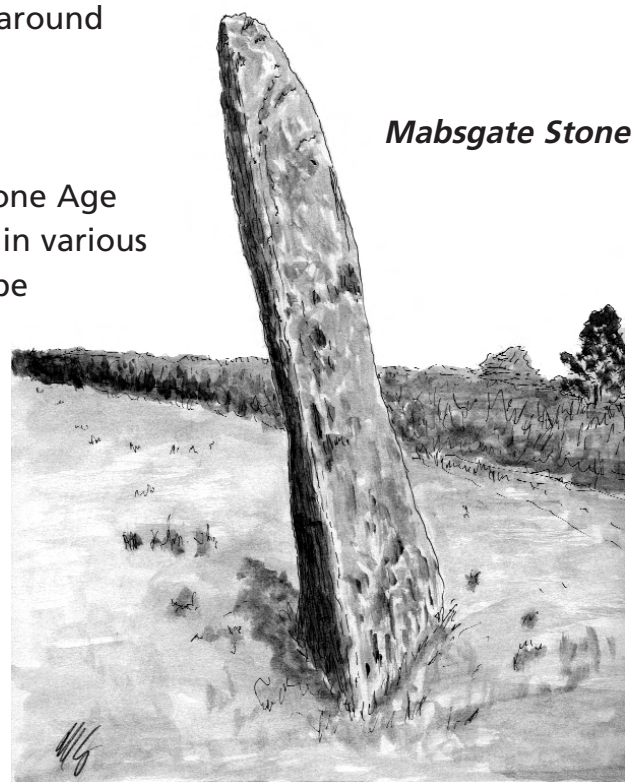
The area has been inhabited since the Middle Stone Age (10,000 years ago). Worked flint has been found in various locations but mainly at coastal sites. The landscape was also populated in the Bronze Age. Of six recorded standing stones, two are visible today. There are two Iron Age promontory forts. The first, Great Castle Head was reused in the Dark Ages when a 'vallum' enclosure (defensive embankment) was constructed. The second is Little Castle Head.

Longoar Bay

Three medieval cist burials (stone-lined graves) were discovered in the cliff face after a rock fall in 2001. Additional graves were excavated in 2003 and dated 7th to 9th century. This graveyard may have served an original settlement at Great Castle Head but became redundant as the current church site was developed.

St. Ishmaels Church

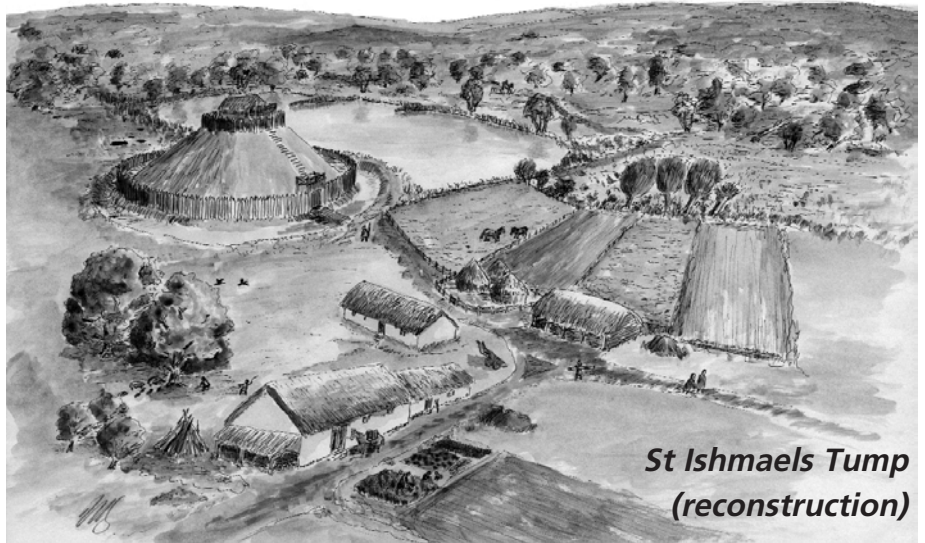
St. Ishmaels or 'Tish' takes its name from the church dedicated to the 6th Century Cornish saint, a disciple of St. David. He became Bishop of St. Davids upon the latter's death. The Laws of Hywel Dda (940-945 AD) say the church was one of seven Bishop's houses of Dyfed. It may have been part of a monastic college, the names Monk Haven and Monkhill deriving from this.



Monk Haven was a landing place for traders and pilgrims on their way to St Davids. There are three medieval inscribed stones at the church. The present church was built in 1100 AD with additions in the 13th and 14th Centuries. It was restored in the 19th Century.

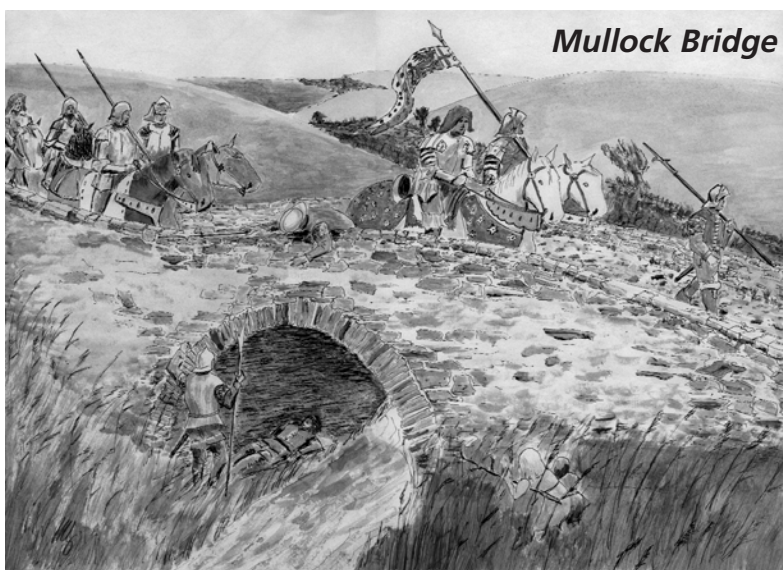
St. Ishmaels Tump

This is what remains of a Norman Motte and Bailey castle. It was a minor medieval stronghold defending the peninsula under the supervision of Walwyn's Castle. Wooden palisades surrounded the top of the fort above the bank and ditch system. The bailey may have been to the south between the motte



**St Ishmaels Tump
(reconstruction)**

and a mere that has been enlarged to form an irrigation lake. Traces of a dam suggest controlled flooding was an additional defence.



Mullock Bridge

Mullock Bridge and Henry Tudor

Henry, born at Pembroke Castle had a claim to the English throne. He spent most of his early life safe in France. On August 1st 1485, he sailed from Harfleur with 2,000 French mercenaries to claim the throne. They landed on August 7th at Mill Bay near Dale. Rhys ap Thomas of Carew Castle had sworn allegiance to Richard III promising that only *over my bellie* would Henry Tudor get beyond his bit of Pembrokeshire. To keep his word

Rhys lay under Mullock Bridge *bellie up* as Henry passed over. Rhys then joined Henry on the march to Bosworth. Legend has it that Henry stopped for a drink at St. Ishmaels from what was subsequently called 'The King's Well'. They reached Bosworth Field in Leicestershire and had defeated Richard III by August 22nd.

Agriculture

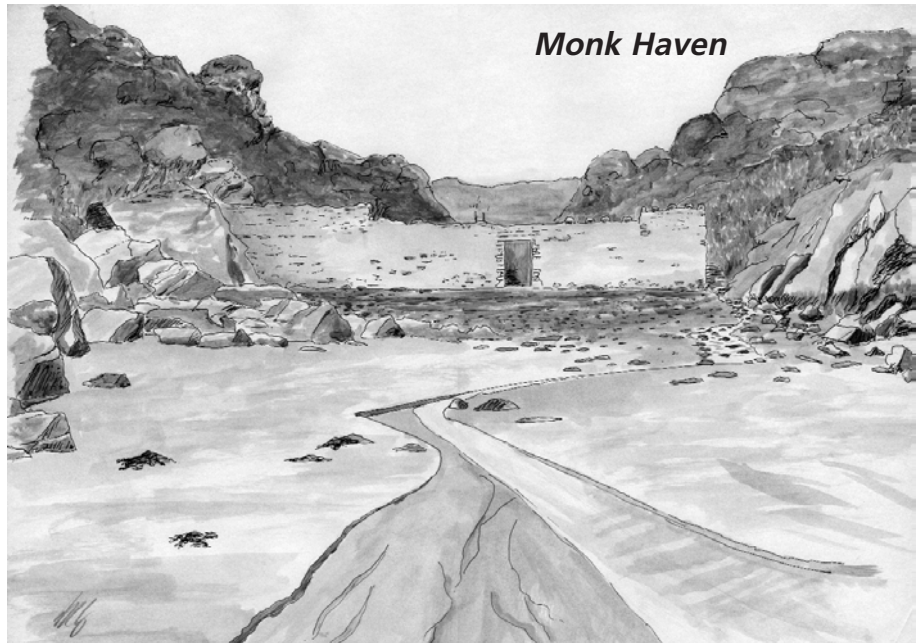
Most of the modern village developed from the medieval period. It is surrounded by long narrow medieval strip fields. These were enclosed between the 17th and 19th Centuries. Farmhouses appeared around the same time. Butter Hill is the oldest estate in the area. Other large farms include Sandy Haven, Trewarren, Bicton, Mullock, Skerryback and Great Hoaten.

Butter Hill

The Grange was the Roch Family seat for 300 years until 1906; a prosperous agricultural settlement of over 300 acres. The last member of the family to live here, was Liberal Member of Parliament for Pembrokeshire. During the 20th century the Estate was divided and successive owners found the upkeep prohibitive. After having been billets for airmen in WWII and then tourists the Grange became unoccupied in 1966. After forty years of decline and neglect the buildings are being restored.

Trewarren House and Monk Haven

Trewarren House was built in 1845 and the Monk Haven valley was planned as wooded pleasure gardens for the Estate. A walled kitchen garden was incorporated into the design. In the 1950s the valley stream was dammed to make the large irrigation pond. The map of 1874 shows an earlier pond of which little remains to be



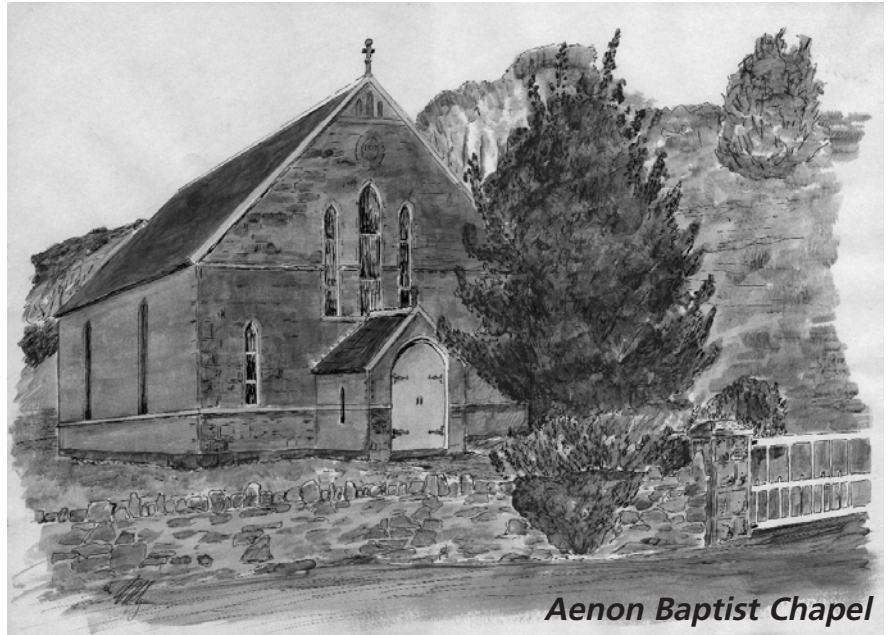
seen except the ornamental bamboos planted at the time. The huge wall behind the beach features in Graham Sutherland's painting *St. Ishmaels* (1976). There are iron rings set into the seaward side for tying up boats. The remains of a boathouse can be seen on the westward landward side. The building on top of the cliff east of Monk Haven is a folly known as the Malacov. It was probably named after a tower in Sebastopol taken by the British in the Crimean War in 1855. This gives us an approximate date for the building. Other mysterious structures to be found in the woods are of similar construction and possibly contemporaneous.

Trades and Industry

In 1870 two leading lights were erected at Great Castle Head to guide ships into harbour. In the 1970s leading lights were installed at Little Castle Head. A number of lime kilns were built locally but only one survives on the road to Sandy Haven. It was restored in the 1980s together with the lime burners hut and weighbridge. The culm (anthracite coal dust) and limestone used in the kilns came from the Hook and Carew areas. Small vessels were unloaded on the shore close to the kilns. The burnt lime was used as a soil improver. Census records from 1851 to 1891 show that agriculture was the major employer in the area but also listed are trades such as, blacksmith, boat builder, butcher, dairymaid, mason, tailor and shoemaker showing the variety of rural occupations in the parish. St. Ishmaels Nurseries opened in the 1930s originally as part of the Dale Nurseries, later the Garden Centre was added.

Aenon Baptist Chapel, Sandy Hill

A Baptist Chapel was built at Sandy Haven on the St. Ishmaels side of the water in 1814. It also served the people of Herbrandston, who when the tide was low enough crossed by the stepping stones. In 1877 a more accessible chapel was opened at Sandy Hill and is still in regular use.



Aenon Baptist Chapel

Congregational Chapel, St. Ishmaels

Prior to the building of the chapel in 1829, services were held on this site under the shade of an old elm tree. The chapel flourished for more than a century but a diminishing congregation led to its closure. It is now a private house.

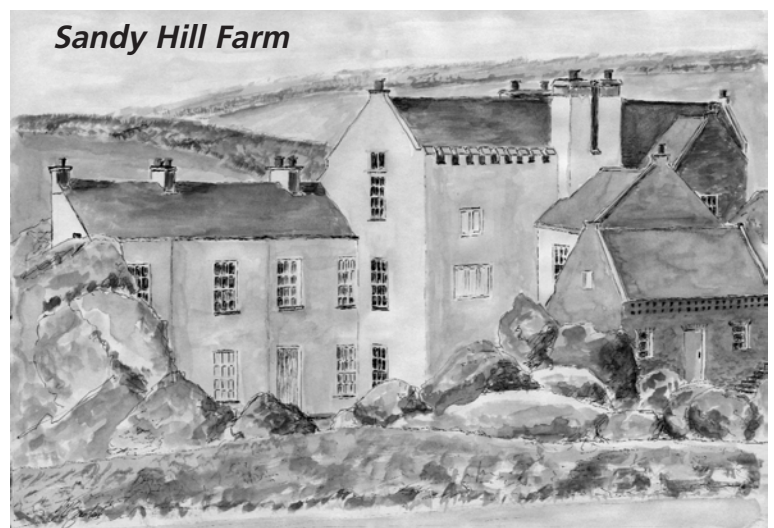
Education

The Census of 1851 lists 67 scholars. It is believed that two sisters, named Glover, ran a 'Dame School'. Following the 1870 Education Act, the St. Ishmaels National School opened on January 1st 1873. A new building was erected in 1914 and used until the 1960s. This building was extended in 1965 and 2006. In 1998 the school was 'closed' but reopened on September 1st as one base of Coastlands School. By 2008 the school had two bases at St. Ishmaels and Herbrandston serving an area mainly west of Milford Haven. Secondary age children usually attend school in Milford Haven.

Military History

From the coast you can clearly see many of the 19th century forts including Thorne Island, Dale Point and Stack Rock. During World War II Sandy Haven was used as a decoy, lit to resemble the whole of Milford Haven (which was blacked out). The idea was that German bombers would drop their deadly cargo harmlessly onto farmland. Small reinforced concrete shelters can be found around the haven where the men who operated the lights and manned the fire-simulating burners sought safety.

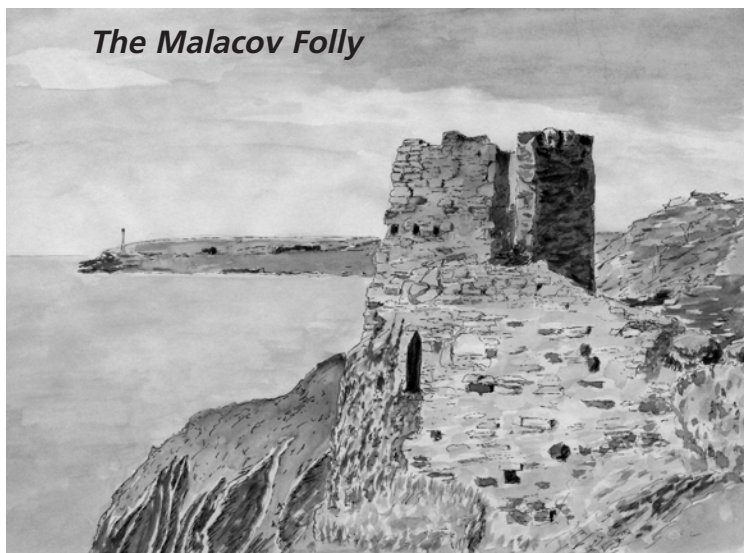
Between Monk Haven and Lindsway Bay at Watch House Point there are a number of WWII buildings including an observation post and 6 inch gun emplacements. East of Bicton Farm is the remains of an anti aircraft gun emplacement.



Sandy Hill Farm

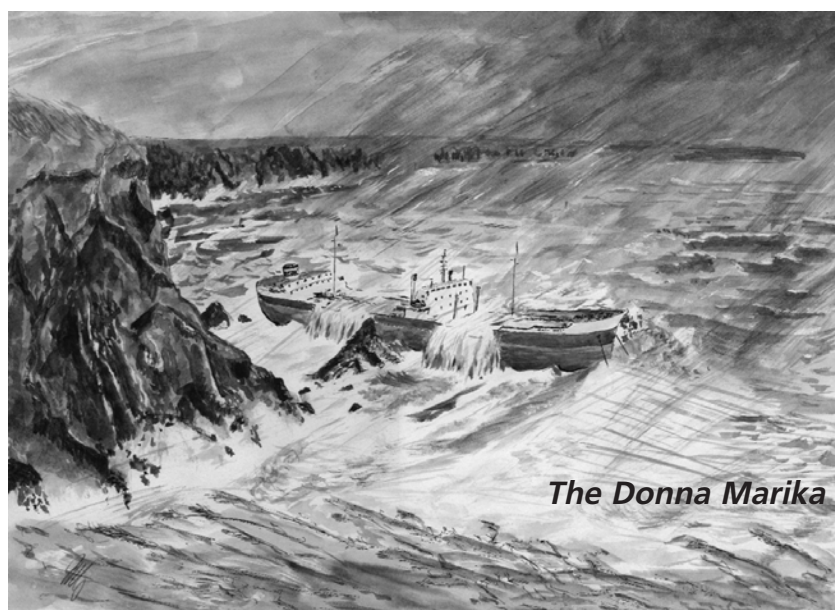
Sandy Haven

Sandy Haven is an inlet formed by rising sea levels after the last ice age. Sandy Haven features strongly in the Pembrokeshire paintings of Graham Sutherland. The artist said that his inspiration had been rekindled by the remarkable quality of Pembrokeshire light. The Sandy Haven Farm was built in the 15th century, although it has been remodelled over the centuries it retains many original features such as a castellated tower.



Lindsway Bay

In 1955 as part of the Queen's Coronation Tour, Prince Charles and Princess Anne took their first steps on Welsh soil when they landed at Lindsway Bay on Sunday August 7th. In August 1973 the 11,000 Ton tanker *Donna Marika* became grounded at Longberry



Point on Lindsway beach.

It was full of explosive aviation spirit and being battered by a violent storm.

The crew of 38 spent a terrifying six hours before they were rescued. Many villagers were evacuated and most spent at least two nights away from their homes. The bell from the *Donna Marika* was presented to the village and can be seen at the Sports and Social Club.

Social Matters

The Memorial Hall was built in the 1920s in memory of those who died in the First World War. Opened by Lord Kensington (St. Brides) it was funded by public subscription. The present Sports and Social Club was erected next to the playing fields in 1982. The football and cricket teams have achieved top County honours. Jubilee Gardens and play area are nearby. The annual Carnival began in the 1920s and is held in August with the procession ending on the sports field. For many years the village held an annual Flower Show and Rice Pudding Fair. The Brook Inn still serves the village as it has for well over 100 years.



**'Tish' mouse
emblem of
St Ishmaels**

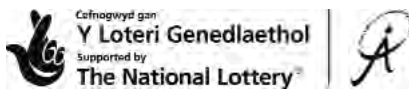
Country Code

Respect • Protect • Enjoy

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.

Acknowledgements

The Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development (PLANED) has been established to improve the social and economic wellbeing of the people and enhance the environment of Pembrokeshire. Funding is provided by 'Awards for All' with support from PLANED through the Welsh Assembly Governments Rural Community Action Fund.



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